



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10**

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OFFICE OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW  
AND ASSESSMENT

(b) (6)

Stafford Creek Correction Center  
191 Constantine Way  
Aberdeen, Washington 98520

Dear Mr. (b) (6) :

Thank you for your letter dated June 3, 2017. I appreciate you taking the time to write to me about fluorinated organic chemicals in the City of Airway Heights drinking water.

Your letter asked for information regarding the health effects associated with exposure to perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). Numerous studies have examined possible links between exposure to PFOA and PFOS and a wide range of health outcomes. The health effects of PFOA and PFOS have also been examined using laboratory studies on animals to establish a link between specific exposures and health effects. Overall, the information available from these studies suggests links between exposure to PFOA and PFOS and several health outcomes, including developmental effects to fetuses exposed during pregnancy (reduced birth weight, reduced bone density, and accelerated puberty), liver effects, immune effects (reduced response to vaccines), increased cholesterol levels, and cancer (liver and testicular). Overall, these studies have shown that the developing fetus is particularly sensitive, and the developmental effects were observed at much lower doses than resulted in health effects in adults. There is no information that suggests older adults are more sensitive to these health effects. It is important to note that the presence of any of these conditions cannot be assumed to be indicative of exposure to PFOA and PFOS, but if they are present, should be discussed with a health care provider.

It is possible to test for PFOA and PFOS in blood. However, while the results can tell you the amount in your blood, they can't tell you if any current health problems are caused by PFOA/PFOS exposure, whether exposure may cause health problems in the future, or if any future health problems may be linked to exposure to PFOA or PFOS.

PFOA and PFOS concentrations in the City of Airways Heights drinking water were found to exceed the EPA lifetime health advisory of 70 parts per trillion on May 16, 2017, when the city received the results of sampling conducted on May 8. At this time, it is not possible to determine how long PFOA and PFOS concentrations in the Airway Heights drinking water were above the lifetime health advisory prior to the May 8 sampling event. Immediately upon learning of the contamination, the city provided alternate, clean water supplies to city residents and businesses connected to the public water system, including the Correctional Industries Airway Heights Food Operations. Since then, the city has temporarily connected to the City of Spokane's water system, and the advisory to not use water from the public system for drinking or cooking was lifted June 8, 2017. Additionally, as a precaution, Correctional Industries Airway Heights Food Operations recalled all meals packaged between April 1, 2017 through May 15,

2017. However, the food was never tested, so it is not possible to determine concentrations of PFOA and PFOS in the meals, if they were in fact contaminated at all.

Since the contamination in the Airway Heights drinking water system was discovered, representatives from the Washington Department of Health and the Spokane Regional Health District have provided outreach to local physicians regarding information about the possible health effects associated with exposure to PFOA and PFOS. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Control/Centers for Disease Control is also educating health care providers to assist in patient consultations. These health professionals emphasize that individual health concerns are best discussed with an individual's own health care provider.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you would like more information or have additional questions, please feel free to contact Elizabeth Allen, Regional Toxicologist, by phone at 206-553-1807, by email to [allen.elizabeth@epa.gov](mailto:allen.elizabeth@epa.gov), or by U.S. Mail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. David Allnutt'.

R. David Allnutt, Director  
Office of Environmental Review and Assessment